

Winter Siblings

Spring

First Mother

Summer

Father

Autumn

Brother

Winter

Sister

Prologue of Spring and Summer

There once was, as it is commonly called, a family. This family was built upon the pillars of a mother and a father who bore two children, one male, and one female *the perfect pairing*. The young boy was very bad, and he was always doing what his parents told him not to. The little girl was sweet and honest, and she always obeyed the wisdom of her parents. Years passed and the young boy became a man who indulged in his parents' fears, while his sister got married, had children of her own, and taught them what her parents taught her. Her brother stole and killed, yet he was never reprimanded by the law *legality in question*. One day, on his parents' anniversary he overdosed on cocaine of *what grade?* and died. His parents didn't cry, as they had prepared for such an event years ago. Their daughter, the sweet girl, died the next month from suicide. Her loving husband found her face-down in a bathtub filled with ice stained red from her open wrists. Her parents cried silver tears *past tense of the previous* because they hadn't prepared.

Winter, The Sister

when I was still a little girl it was like first
mother wanted me to be older like she wanted me to be
bigger than she was

The TV always told me that the adults liked having
children because it gave them little workers like in
the old days

In the old days the parents and adults would pop out
little children and feed them pure butter so they
would grow faster and put some padding on their bones
The children worked hard for 75 years but on the 76th
year they all walked inside their homes to the left of
the fields

They pulled out the shotguns that their fathers had
told them to keep loaded in case a bad person wanted
to hurt them

On the 76th year they walked into the dirt outside of
their bedrooms and shot each other dead one slug at a
time and the blood clogged the big pores the guns made
Their children promised themselves that they would
never repeat their parents' mistakes

The new children made it to the 77th year and then they
all stabbed each other with the steak knives they used
to eat with on Tuesdays

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The first year.

I think it probably started like any other day, the problem was
just that I had no idea how to read. I knew I would learn as I
got older. Hell, I had an idea of the process, but the execution
was shit. Each letter has a sound, right? A. Ah. Ahhh. B. Bee.
Beeeee. C. Cee. SSSSSSeeeee, a bit more like that.

Spring, The First Mother

February, the leap year.

Of course, the only issue one might come across when explicating the poetry of Sylvia Plath is that the biographical information is, for many, simply too prominent to ignore, at least in most facets of her canon. Take “Daddy” for example. I once had a student who was under the impression that every poem was written from the perspective of the author. I explained to him with painful detail that one must differentiate the speaker from the author. Of course, the speaker and author were once caught in bed together on a summer day, and they both had their pants down. I don’t think I’ll be able to teach Plath anymore.

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Summer, The Father

July of the first year.

“Daddy...daddy? will you remind me what it was you used to call me when I was still a baby? I used to remember--at least it felt like I could. It was swimming around in the little blue pool in the back of my mind, but the water is cold now. what did you call me?”

“Pandora. My little Pandora.”

(The page contains diagonal hatching marks.)

Q) Do you think I'm really like mother? Am I as good as her?

A) Oh, yes. You're even better than she is because your mind is larger. Your brains are the same, but your mind is so soft and decadent. Your consciousness radiates an essence of cotton candy.

Q) How? How am I better than mother? She came before me, so how could I surpass her?

A) Think of her as the first mother. You could be something of a second mother. Isn't the number 2 larger than 1?

Q) Yes.

A) Doesn't mother make you angry sometimes?...when she reminds you that you're not allowed to run with knives and take naps in the oven?

q) Yes...but she must have her reasons.

A) Reason is false. Reason teaches the creative to shut down the mind and eliminate pure consciousness. Someday you will be the second mother; numbers never lie.

My sister used to ask me if I brushed my teeth before I went to bed, and I always laughed. It felt like a waste of time because the bristles couldn't penetrate the bone-tooth to make it clean. The bristles could never fix the blackness resting inside my back teeth because it wasn't broken. The blackness lived in my skull and peered from my mouth when my winter sibling asked me if I kissed mother goodnight.

Summer, The Father

We were just kids back then, barely able to drive cars and work at the department stores that sold tools and couches. We couldn't be kept apart, though our parents tried their best to keep our purity intact. She was pregnant one year after our first date and we decided to keep it, get married, fall in love, grow old together, and watch our childrens' children grow up. It was all fucked, of course. After Autumn died Winter never recovered. My little Pandora kissed his clammy face, her silver fingers running through his greasy, slicked back hair. The funeral directors made him as handsome as he'd never been able to be.

Winter, The Sister

Greek mythology states that Pandora, the first woman, brought a shoebox that had a pair of cherry red stilettos that had broken heels and torn sides. I wonder if Pandora accounted for the bloody lip of the gods.

Winter, The Sister

I think that brother was a baby when mother remembered
To remind me that I hadn't yet learned to read.
I never forgave her for that, because I was too worried about
Being able to tell him that he was cute without the influence
Of a list of thousands of words telling me that what I dreamt of
Every evening before bed was wrong.
Father just didn't care, and he was never home to try.
Mother told me that I was cold like the winter, and I think I
know what she meant now, but the winter always ends.
The snow is plowed away, the ice is riddled with salt, and the
air is burnt with electric heat and fire.
I suppose I've always felt a bit too much like winter, but
Autumn comes first. The cycle is ruptured, and I feel the sloop
running from my ears, dripping down the sides of my neck and
staining skin.
The leaves are green and the weather is warm. Autumn used to
make the maple leaf turn bright red with a chill, but I have my
own way. I have the chill I need, and I have all of the red dye
I could ask for.

Autumn, The Brother

They keep asking me where you touched me and I never tell them that you never touched me, because I think they wouldn't believe me, or at least they wouldn't want to, shoving their dolls in my face with pink eyes, lovely pink eyes that plead for me to tell them where you touched me so they'll stop gripping the little doll by its threaded throat. I forget when you first handed me the dry snow, that little pile of powder. Breathe it in, you told me. It went in my body dry and became wet, but it was always cold.

She was younger in looks but people always thought I was older, even though she outlived me by six years. She had a youthful face, and the eyes she saw with were gray, as if she hadn't yet decided their color. No absolutes existed in her, and I thought it was because she must have been in flux.

We were close, like the temperatures we held. She was around 32 degrees Fahrenheit, while I was closer to 50. She always knew she would be shut down by human nature because she was too cold, too wild, but she never fought it. She let the world consume her, and her patriarch above, resting in the throes of Olympic power, could do nothing for her. I'd like to join her, at least once more. I think the snow will help me. An old friend—God, I've forgotten his name—taught me how. Just a touch on the table. Shape it as a line. Breathe. Breathe. Breathe. Breathe. One more. And sleep... I remembered to brush my teeth before bed. I hope she'll be proud of me.

Winter, The Sister

When I was a little girl I promised myself that I'd never be like the children on the TV, the ones that became their parents and repeated the cycle, building the sequence up and up until it was religion. Father tried to give me a shotgun, like they had, and I broke it down. The children probably never realized they were in bad faith when they killed each other; they probably never knew they had no right to each other's blood. That's okay, though. I get to learn from their mistakes, and I won't be in bad faith like they were. When the knife becomes hot and the metal is forged in a molten foundry, it will cool in the ice of the flesh where I rest it-- my own ice, the cubes, the shavings, and the slabs that garnish the ground.

Epilogue of Autumn and winter

Verse

Oh, mother was righteous,
 When she taught us how to sing
 And praise the earth for giving
 her the four seasons

Refrain

Mother earth, sweet mother earth,
 Thank you for the warm, warm summer, my husband
 Thank you for the autumn, the chilled voice of my son
 Thank you for the winter and the bitter snow, my daughter

Verse

Father was fury when he found the bruises,
 That lined Winter's snowy eyes caked with salt.
 She cried from her eyes the sorrow of loss,
 The Winter Sibling, her brother, was dead to the world

Refrain

Mother earth, sweet mother earth,
 Thank you for the warm, warm summer, my husband
 Thank you for the autumn, the chilled voice of my son
 Thank you for the winter and the bitter snow, my daughter

Verse

Winter's husband, the father of her children, was not a patient man

But he asked her nicely to end her falling tears,

She tried but couldn't stop, for she had loved her brother so

Her misery became life, through the loss of her own

Refrain

~~Mother earth, sweet mother earth...~~